DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 347 909 HE 025 672

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TITLE Internationalizing the Business Curriculum: A Status Report.
PUB DATE 26 Mar 92
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions (11th, Ypsilanti, MI, March 25-28, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - General (140)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Business Education; *Curriculum Enrichment; *Educational Change; *Educational Needs; Evaluation; Global Approach; Higher Education; *International Education; Surveys; Undergraduate Study

ABSTRACT

This paper is a status report and an extension probing further into the issue of internationalizing the undergraduate business school curriculum. The research analyzes the responses (n=123) to a 1992 survey of business schools and programs that were members of the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) to determine to what extent efforts to globalize the undergraduate business curriculum were actually undertaken and completed and whether interest in accreditation by AACSB drove this change. Results indicate that although some progress has been achieved in moving toward more undergraduate international course offerings and more inclusion of global topics in existing courses, much improvement is still needed. In fact, it is noted that changes in business school curricula are lagging far behind the actual business world in terms of addressing international concerns. In general, whether or not an institution was AACSB accredited made no significant difference in the various dimensions of globalization addressed by this study. Contains 10 tables. (GLR)

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Internationalizing the Business Curriculum: A Status Report

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Abstract

This paper is a status report and an extension probing further into the issue of internationalizing the undergraduate business school curriculum. The research analyzes the responses of a 1992 survey of the deans in AACSB member U.S. Business Schools and programs to determine to what extent efforts to globalize the undergraduate business curriculum were actually undertaken and completed and whether interest in accreditation by AACSB drove this change. Results indicate that although some progress has been achieved in moving toward more undergraduate international course offerings and more inclusion of global topics in existing courses, much improvement is still needed. In general whether or not an institution was AACSB accredited made no significant difference in the various dimensions of globalization addressed by this study.

Internationalizing the Business School Curriculum: A Status Report

As an accrediting agency for Colleges and Schools of Business, the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) has influenced the scope and focus of business curricula for many years. In the 1970s AACSB changed its accreditation standards to require that the business school curriculum contain one or more elements of international exposure for its students. Data gathered in 1984 by Nehrt (1987) and in 1985 by Thanopoulos & Vernon (1987) examined the extent and intentions of U.S. business programs to "globalize" their curricula at that time. This paper is a status report and an extension probing further into the issue of internationalizing the business school curriculum. This research reports the results of a 1992 survey of the deans in AACSB member U.S. Business Schools and Programs to determine to what extent efforts to globalize the curriculum were actually undertaken and completed and whether interest in accreditation by AACSB drove this change (or whether the change occurred as a response to the rapidly changing global environment, independent of interest in AACSB accreditation). A secondary issue that was explored

concerned the influence or lack of influence of the leadership of the business program in determining the movement of the program toward globalization and/or accreditation. Other areas investigated whether interest in global issues had increased in the last five years as reflected in the business curriculum, whether mission statements were being changed and how, and whether faculty were trained to address global issues in their respective disciplines. A listing of global issues and courses taught in the various institutions was also gathered.

Method

A 21-item survey was mailed to Deans, Department Chairs, or Heads of the U.S. AACSB member Schools of Business or Business Programs. The survey solicited responses to questions related to the extent to which the business curriculum had changed its focus on international issues and items related to size of the program and accreditation status. Anonymity of individual responses was assured. The survey required approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Findings

Surveys were returned from 123 AACSB member schools. Of those 112 institutions answering the

question on current accreditation status, 34.82% were accredited while 65.18% were not. Interestingly when the non-accredited institutions were asked if they planned to seek accreditation within the next five years, 63.38% of them answered affirmatively while an additional 5 institutions or 7.04% indicated "maybe."

When further asked if the change in AACSB standards had caused a change in their plans for accreditation only 44.90% of the 49 institutions answering this question responded "yes." If the institution was not going to pursue AACSB accreditation within the next five years, an open ended question requesting why was asked. The most frequent reasons cited were cost, have ACBSP (Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs) accreditation or pursuing it, and the perception that requirements still favor large institutions with research emphasis and discriminate against smaller schools. This response raises an interesting question concerning whether institutions are aware of the most recent changes concerning AACSB accreditation and if so are they interpreting implementation of those standards correctly. In fact, one institution clearly stated uncertainty concerning implementation of the new

standards as its reason for not pursuing accreditation within the next five years.

The 50 institutions planning to seek AACSB accreditation answered the question asking if there had been a change in leadership of the head of their business school within the last three years. In total 46.00% responded "yes" while the other 54.00% indicated "no." Of those that had had a change in leadership, 78.26% stated that the previous leader had an interest in accreditation. Support for any movement of Business programs to be AACSB accredited due to a change in leadership was not found.

The question of whether the undergraduate business program was going to change its mission or emphasis because of the new AACSB standards was also probed. Of the 109 institutions responding, 36 or 33.03% stated "yes" and 3 more indicated "maybe." The most frequent change to be initiated related to emphasis on making the mission statement more specific so that output could be measured. Only a few institutions mentioned more emphasis on globalization. Since the new AACSB standards examine an institution's mission and then evaluate whether it is appropriate and has been achieved, the thrust toward measurable output could be

expected. Also dovetailing with this issue could be the issue of assessment for the institutions as a whole. Overall, however, it should be emphasized that 64.22% of the institutions reported no intention of changing their business undergraduate mission statement because of the new AACSB standards. Additionally 85.71% of the institutions not seeking AACSB accreditation had no plans to change their mission due to the new standards while 60.00% of institutions seeking accreditation did not plan to change their mission. The new AACSB standards may be driving some institutions to change the undergraduate business mission statement, but the new standards are not a major driving force for the majority of institutions.

Overall 112 institutions responded to the question concerning global topics covered in at least one undergraduate core business or economics course. Table 1 displays the number and corresponding percentage of institutions responding to each topic. By far global

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Insert Table 1 about here

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marketing and global finance are most frequently addressed with global strategy for business a fairly

close third. The least addressed global topic at 25.00% is the staffing of foreign positions in organizations. A possible explanation could be that human resources is not traditionally a core business course. However, management of human resources including global issues is vital to all organizations. It should be covered as part of a basic management course to insure at a very minimum that all business majors are exposed to the topic. Perhaps Myers (1990) is correct in making a plea for Human Resources Management as a part of the common body of knowledge or core courses for all business majors. Certainly inclusion of the global issues concerning staffing foreign positions in organizations would be a vital segment of Human Resources Management. An open ended request for any other global topics offered by the institutions revealed that global accounting and comparative economic systems were most frequent responses with six each. The topic global management followed with four responses. In comparison to the research by Thanopoulos & Vernon (1987) that reported 67% of AACSB member schools in their study incorporate international business information into their functional courses, this study reveals that 94.64% of

the responding institutions incorporate global topics into their undergraduate core courses in business or economics. Direct comparison may be done with care since sample size of this current study is approximately 30% that of Thanopoulos & Vernon's study.

Table 2 displays the percentage of accredited versus non-accredited institutions that responded the specific global topic was covered in at least one undergraduate core business or economics course. Although the accredited institutions offered 11 to

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Insert Table 2 about here

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13 percent more coverage in global marketing, global strategy, and global finance topics, the non-accredited institutions offered 11% and 8% more coverage on the topics of staffing foreign positions in organizations and global culture respectively. There was no significant difference between accredited and non-accredited institutions concerning the global topics offered. Of the responding institutions, 94.64% checked at least one global topic. Overall the average

number of global topics offered by accredited institutions was 4.41 while that offered by non-accredited institutions was 4.14. This indicates that although there is some difference in the mix of global issues addressed in institutions, there is essentially no difference in the average number of global topics with regard to accreditation.

The percentage of institutions offering specific international business courses is displayed in Table 3 along with the corresponding percentage for that course from the study by Thanopoulos & Vernon (1987).

Insert Table 3 about here

Comparison indicates the greatest change occurred with a 14% increase in number of institutions offering an International Management course. An 8% increase in International Business offerings was the next greatest increase. These results are not totally surprising since these two courses lagged behind the percentage offerings of International Marketing, International Economics, and International Finance in the Thanopoulos & Vernon (1987) study. Modest gains of 5%, 4% and 3% were seen in International Economics,

International Business Law, and International Marketing respectively. International Finance could not be easily compared because the study by Thanopoulos & Vernon (1987) had gathered this data as separate Micro- and Macro-Finance.

Comparison of international course offerings for accredited versus non-accredited institutions is displayed in Table 4. International Marketing,

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Insert Table 4 about here

International Economics, International Business, and International Finance are the most frequently offered courses. Accredited institutions offered an average of 3.34 international courses while non-accredited institutions offered an approximately equal average at 3.15 international courses. No significant difference was found between accredited and non-accredited institutions concerning international business course offerings.

Overall the same percentage of accredited and non-accredited institutions offer an International Economics course. International Marketing and International Finance are offered by 3% and 5% more

accredited than non-accredited institutions respectively. Seven percent more accredited institutions offer International Business Law when compared to non-accredited institutions, but seven percent more non-accredited institutions offer International Business when compared to accredited institutions. Finally, 12% more accredited institutions offer International Management than non-accredited institutions do. An open ended question asking institutions to list any other global courses they offer included the following responses: International Accounting (5), International Trade (2), Comparative Economic Systems (2), International Production Management, Global Insurance, and International Business Policy.

Inquiry was made as to whether the business curriculum had more emphasis on global issues than it did 5 years ago. Overall 94.21% of the responding institutions indicated more emphasis today. Separating accredited and non-accredited institutions on this question resulted in the data in Table 5. Clearly 97.4%

Insert Table 5 about here

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of accredited institutions had more global emphasis today than 5 years ago while 91.7% of non-accredited institutions answered "yes" to more global emphasis. A statistical test for significant difference between accredited and non-accredited institutions for this response could not be validly performed because of low expected cell sizes for the "no" responses.

Two questions relating to faculty and their global training were included in this study. First, deans were asked how prepared or trained they felt their faculty was to address global issues in their respective courses. Table 6 shows that 46.67% of faculty were perceived as "somewhat prepared" to

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Insert Table 6 about here

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address global issues. Another 25.00% were categorized as "adequately prepared" with 23.33% rated "well prepared."

Comparison of institutions according to accreditation status resulted in Table 7. An apparent

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Insert Table 7 about here

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shift from "somewhat prepared" to "well prepared" occurs for the accredited institutions. Because the expected cell values for the high and low ends of the scale were too small, a statistical test for significant difference between accredited and non-accredited institutions concerning the dean's perception of the preparedness of their faculty to address global issues in their respective courses could not be validly performed.

Another question asked deans what percentage of their faculty have received training in international aspects of their disciplines. The overall results are displayed in Table 8. The largest percent at 46.22

Insert Table 8 about here

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belongs to the 0-20% category. Next is the 21-40% category at 36.13%. These two categories account for over four-fifths of the responses. No institution replied in the 81 to 100% category. All institutions need to strive to achieve this goal since the vast majority of faculty have 40% or less training in the global issues of their disciplines.

Separation of accredited versus non-accredited institutions concerning this question resulted in Table 9. Non-accredited institutions had approximately 10%

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more faculty in the 0 to 20% category, while accredited institutions had approximately 10% more faculty in the 41-60% category. Because several expected cell sizes were too small, a statistical test for significant difference between accredited and non-accredited institutions concerning percentage of faculty having training in international aspects of their disciplines could not be validly performed.

Finally if the institution offered a doctoral degree in business, it was asked if there was currently a core International Business course required for all doctoral majors. Of the sample, thirteen institutions had doctoral programs, and all thirteen replied that no core International Business course was offered. When further requested to indicate if doctoral students were required to take an international course in their major area of concentration, the responses in Table 10 were received.

Insert Table 10 about here

The study by Nehrt (1987) suggested that doctoral programs need to internationalize by offering a core International Business course or a major international course in the doctoral student's discipline. Nehrt's study found only 17% of the doctoral candidates who had completed all coursework had had any international preparation in their respective disciplines. Because the response in this study was so low for institutions with doctoral programs, care must be taken in any interpretation. But, clearly no responding institution had a required core International Business course, and a very small percent required an international course in each respective major area.

The impact of size of undergraduate business program was also addressed in this study. Institutions were assigned to one of three groups depending on number of students. If there were less than 999 students in the undergraduate business program, the institution was considered small. A student count of 1000 to 1999 was considered medium, and a total of 2000 or more students was considered a large institution.

Size of institution on these three dimensions versus accreditation status was found to be significant. Table 11 displays the number of institutions in each

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Insert Table 11 about here

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size category along with accreditation status. Size of institution versus the global topics offered was not significant. Size of institution versus international course offerings with International Business Law omitted due to low theoretical frequency cell count was not significant. The issue of size of institution versus more emphasis on global issues in the business curriculum than five years ago yielded low expected cell counts for the "no" responses, and so a statistical test for difference could not be validly performed. Likewise a statistical test for size versus either faculty preparedness to address global issues or faculty specialized training in global aspects of their discipline could not be validly performed again due to some low cell sizes.

Conclusions

Changes in Business School curricula are lagging far behind the actual business world in terms of addressing

international concerns. Although some changes have occurred over the past ten years, internationalization of the business school curriculum is far from ideal or complete. Progress has been achieved in moving toward more international course offerings and more inclusion of global issues within courses; however, many areas remain to be improved. This study examined the extent to which changes have been made to include an international focus in business courses and the influence of AACSB in those changes. In general whether an institution was accredited by AACSB or not made no significant difference in the various dimensions of globalization addressed by this study.

References

Myers, D. W. (1990, August). Business schools lag in HR offerings. HR Magazine, pp. 72-75.

Nehrt, L. C. (1987). The internationalization of the curriculum. Journal of International Business Studies, Spring, 83-90.

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Table 1

Institutions That Cover Global Topic in Undergraduate Curriculum

	Number	Percent of Institutions
Global Marketing	98	87.50
Global Finance	94	83.93
Global Strategy in Businesses	86	76.79
How Cultures Vary Globally	63	56.25
International Business Ethics	61	54.46
Managing Global Risk	44	39.29
Staffing Foreign Positions in Organizations	28	25.00

Table 2

Institutions That Cover Global Topic in Undergraduate Curriculum by Accreditation Status

	Accredited		Non-Accredited	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Global Marketing	37	94.9	61	83.6
Global Finance	36	92.3	58	79.5
Global Strategy in Businesses	33	84.6	53	72.6
How Cultures Vary Globally	20	51.3	43	58.9
International Business Ethics	23	59.0	38	52.1
Managing Global Risk	16	41.0	28	38.4
Staffing Foreign Positions in Organizations	7	17.9	21	28.8

Table 3

Comparison of International Course Offerings by Institutions in This Study with That of Thanopoulos & Vernon

	Percentage of Schools Offering Course	
	This Study	Thanopoulos & Vernon
International Marketing	71.1	67.7
International Economics	66.1	61.3
International Business	62.0	53.7
International Finance	62.0	*
International Management	47.9	34.1
International Business Law	14.9	11.0

*Thanopoulos & Vernon had gathered data separately for Micro-Finance at 30% and Macro-Finance at 41%.

Table 4

Institutions That Offer International Course in Undergraduate Curriculum by Accreditation Status

	Accreditation Status			
	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
International Business	21	55.3	45	62.5
International Business Law	7	18.4	8	11.1
International Management	21	55.3	31	43.1
International Marketing	28	73.7	51	70.8
International Finance	25	65.8	44	61.1
International Economics	25	65.8	48	66.7

Table 5

Institutions Reporting More Global Emphasis in Business Curriculum Today Than Five Years Ago

	More Global Emphasis Than 5 Years Ago			
	Yes		No	
Accreditation	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	37	97.4	1	2.6
No	66	91.7	6	8.3

Table 6

Faculty Preparedness to Address Global Issues in Their Respective Courses as Perceived by Their Dean

	Number	Percent
Not prepared	1	0.83
Somewhat prepared	56	46.67
Adequately prepared	30	25.00
Well prepared	28	23.33
Exceptionally prepared	5	4.17

Table 7

Comparison of Faculty Preparedness to Address Global Issues in Their Respective Courses by Accreditation Status

	Accreditation Status			
	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Not prepared	0	0.0	1	1.4
Somewhat prepared	13	34.2	36	50.7
Adequately prepared	11	29.0	18	25.4
Well prepared	12	31.6	14	19.7
Exceptionally prepared	2	5.3	2	2.8

Table 8

Faculty Level of Global Training as Reported by Their Dean

Percent of Faculty With Global Training	Number	Percent
0-20%	55	46.22
21-40%	43	36.13
41-60%	12	10.08
61-80%	9	7.56
81-100%	0	0.00

Table 9

Faculty Level of Global Training by Accreditation Status

Percent of Faculty With Global Training	Accreditation Status			
	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-20%	15	39.5	35	49.3
21-40%	13	34.2	27	38.0
41-60%	6	15.8	4	5.6
61-80%	4	10.5	5	7.0
81-100%	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 10

Institutions With a Doctoral Program Requiring an International Course in a Respective Major Concentration

Major Area	Number	Percent
Management	1	7.7
Marketing	1	7.7
Accounting	1	7.7
Finance	2	15.4
Economics	1	7.7
Information Systems	0	0.0

Table 11

Institutions Categorized by Size and Accreditation Status

Size of Institution (Students)	Accreditation Status	
	Yes	No
<999	9	34
1000-1999	12	30
2000+	16	6